

Donald R. Kirk

SHAREHOLDER

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Overview

Donald Kirk is a board certified attorney who represents clients in high-value insolvency and financial restructuring matters, officer and director fiduciary duty litigation, and commercial litigation. He regularly represents secured lenders, purchasers of assets from troubled companies, debtors, fiduciaries, committees, and other stakeholders in multiparty disputes and reorganizations.

His practice has recently focused on the highly specialized health care insolvency industry, particularly on behalf of institutional buyers of health care practices such as hospitals and skilled care facilities. Donald has represented stalking horse buyers in cases in and out of Florida, secured lenders that are participants in complex financing facilities, physician practice groups in contract disputes such as risk share agreements, and defending officers and directors of hospitals.

Donald's representation of officers and directors is expansive and typically involves taking the lead defense role in matters involving numerous defendants and their legal teams. His clients include executives of public, private, and not-for-profit companies, advising them on their duties, risks, and obligations as financial concerns arise, defending and resolving litigation involving breaches of fiduciary duty, and advisory services concerning governmental investigations. His expertise includes navigating the nuanced insurance issues that arise in such circumstances. He has successfully led multiparty negotiations for his clients in numerous such matters ranging in size from several million to hundreds of million dollars in claims. These resolutions often involve permanent relief from future claims.

Donald has handled contested matters, through trial, in numerous state and federal courts, including those in Colorado, Delaware, New York, California, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Washington, New Hampshire, and U.S. Virgin Islands.

Donald is board certified in business bankruptcy by the American Board of Certification, and is a fellow of the American College of Bankruptcy. He is also a former president of the Tampa Bay Bankruptcy Bar Association. As co-chair of the Florida Bar's Proceeding Supplementary Task Force, his team revised Florida's proceeding supplementary judgment execution statute. He also chaired the American Bar Association's successful effort to draft a model asset purchase agreement for bankruptcy sales.

Chambers USA, a leading guide to the legal profession, noted that he "is very experienced in a wide variety of representations and a wide variety of cases. He's very bright, very capable, and does a good job across the board."

Experience

Representative Experience

- Defended former CEOs and CFOs of international cruise ship operator against claims exceeding \$1 billion.
- Lead counsel to assignee of Butler & Hosch law firm and its 15 affiliated entities, overseeing the orderly liquidation of one of the nation's largest foreclosure law firms. The case involved novel and complex consumer and financial privacy issues, asserted claims of nearly \$100 million, and breach of fiduciary duty claims.
- Represented 10 insurers in contested matters in the Hovensa LLC bankruptcy case pending in the District of the Virgin Islands, the largest Chapter 11 proceedings in that district's history. Our clients faced demands exceeding \$100 million.
- Defended six board members of a well-known not-for-profit against claims of breaches of fiduciary duties where claims exceeded \$50 million.
- Defended six former officers of bankrupt public aviation company (Avantair) against claims exceeding several hundred million dollars.
- Represented national financial institution in restructure of \$200 million credit facility with prominent South Florida commercial real estate developer.
- Represented debtor in confirmed Chapter 11 bankruptcy case for 18-store Church's Chicken franchisee (Quick Service Foods, No. 08-02797).
- Represented the unsecured creditors' committee and, post-confirmation, the liquidation trustee in the Tropical Sportswear Inc. Chapter 11 cases (No. 04-24134). The case involved the \$88.5 million sale of assets to Perry Ellis International.
- Represented the ad hoc committee of 11% senior secured noteholders and certain of those noteholders providing DIP financing in the Anchor Glass Container Corp. Chapter 11 proceeding (No. 05-15606). The bondholders (approximately \$350 million) became the owners of the reorganized company.

- Represented a Norwegian general partner in the Kaiser Aluminum Corp. Chapter 11 proceedings in the District of Delaware where at trial we preserved a valuable but highly contested right of first refusal relating to a \$331 million partnership interest in a bauxite mine in Jamaica.
- Represented FINOVA Capital Corp. in the Optical Technologies Chapter 11 cases. The client financed thousands of equipment leases pre-petition and provided post-petition financing. The case evolved into important precedent over the extent of the bankruptcy court's post-confirmation jurisdiction over thousands of third parties.

Significant Recent Reported Decisions

- *Wells Fargo Equip. Fin. v. Bacjet*, 221 So. 3d 671 (Fla. 4th DCA 2017) (successfully establishing personal jurisdiction over foreign corporation in aviation-related dispute).
- *In re Petroforte Brasileiro de Petroleo Ltda.*, 530 B.R. 503 (Bankr. M.D. Fla. 2015) (further defining constitutional limits in Chapter 15 foreign bankruptcy proceedings).
- *Republic Credit Corp. I v. Upshaw*, 10 So. 3d 1103 (Fla. 4th DCA 2009) (evaluating whether Florida's tenants by the entirety protection extends to California real estate).
- *In re Fultonville Metal Prods. Co.*, 330 B.R. 305 (Bankr. M.D. Fla. 2005) (discussing fraudulent transfer and preference defenses relative to critical vendor status).
- *In re Eigsti*, 323 B.R. 778 (Bankr. M.D. Fla. 2005) (successfully prosecuted fraud claims on behalf of Syngenta Seeds Inc.).
- *In re Tropical Sportswear Int'l Corp.*, 320 B.R. 15 (Bankr. M.D. Fla. 2005) (establishing legal framework for critical vendor status in Eleventh Circuit).
- *In re Alvarez*, 224 F.3d 1273 (11th Cir. 2000) (establishing Eleventh Circuit guidelines concerning whether a cause of action is property of the bankruptcy estate).

Areas of Focus

Practices

- Creditors' Rights and Bankruptcy
- Litigation and Trials
- Insolvency-Related Directors and Officers (D&O) Litigation
- Distressed Asset and Workout
- Distressed Health Care
- Banking, Commercial, and Consumer Finance
- Securities Litigation and Enforcement
- Real Property Litigation

Industries

- Banking, Commercial, and Consumer Finance

- [Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices](#)
- [Crypto Insolvency and Fiduciary Practice](#)
- [Aviation](#)

Insights

02.20.2024

Best Practices for Officers, Directors, and Advisers Navigating Fiduciary Challenges Amid Economic Uncertainty

10.19.2022

Litigating D&O Claims in the Modern Age: What's the Difference Between a Breach of Fiduciary Duty and Doing Your Job Really, Really Badly?

05.14.2020

Lessons Learned: Receiverships

03.31.2020

COVID-19: What a Lender Can Do to Prepare for the Inevitable Defaults Part 2

03.19.2020

COVID-19: What a Lender Can Do to Prepare for the Inevitable Defaults

03.17.2020

COVID-19: What Can a Lender Do to Prepare for the Inevitable Defaults?

09.16.2016

Model Asset Purchase Agreement for Bankruptcy Sales

06.08.2016

New Road Map for Proceedings Supplementary in Florida

05.03.2016

The New Roadmap for Proceedings Supplementary in Florida

03.30.2016

New Statute Clarifies Florida's Judgment Execution Law

05.01.2011

Investing in State Tax Liens: Understanding the Mechanics of Acquisition

01.01.2010

The Impact of Changes in Bankruptcy Law

11.01.2009

Due Diligence Concerns in Loan Transactions

03.01.2009

Creditors' Rights in Chapter 11 Cases - Leading Lawyers on Navigating the Reorganization Process, Exercising Creditors' Rights, and Understanding the Impact of Current Developments

01.01.2008

How to Prepare for Subprime-Related Litigation

04.01.2002

Application of Florida's Homestead Exemption to Citizens of Foreign Countries

01.01.1997

Franchise Dual-branding: The Irony of Association

11.29.2022

Carlton Fields' Donald Kirk Selected as Fellow of the American College of Bankruptcy

10.19.2022

Donald Kirk Co-Authors Article for ABA Business Law Today: "Litigating D&O Claims in the Modern Age: What's the Difference Between a Breach of Fiduciary Duty and Doing Your Job Really, Really Badly?"

09.22.2022

Carlton Fields' Donald Kirk Receives ABA Business Law Section Chair's Award

08.30.2022

Carlton Fields Post-Judgment Enforcement Team Obtains \$1.5M Settlement in Complex Asset Protection Scheme

07.11.2022

Litigator Benjamin Stoll Joins Carlton Fields in Washington, D.C.

07.01.2022

Carlton Fields Named Top Firm and Attorneys Named Legal Leaders in Florida Trend's 2022 "Legal Elite"

10.12.2021

Carlton Fields Adds on to its Business Litigation Team

06.28.2021

Carlton Fields Named Top Firm and Attorneys Named Legal Leaders in Florida Trend's 2021 "Legal Elite"

06.02.2021

Will Zoom Glitches Open the Door for New Deposition Technology for Litigators?

05.21.2021

Carlton Fields Ranks Among Best in Chambers USA 2021 Guide

08.20.2020

11 Carlton Fields Attorneys Named 2021 “Lawyers of the Year”

07.23.2020

Carlton Fields Adds Trial Vet Robert L. Shannon Jr. in Atlanta

05.13.2020

Debtor-in-Possession Lenders’ Strings May Pose Concerns for Creditors

04.23.2020

Carlton Fields Ranks Among Best in Chambers USA 2020 Guide

05.06.2019

Carlton Fields Adds Experienced Bankruptcy Attorney in Miami

05.03.2019

Carlton Fields Ranks Among Best in Chambers USA 2019 Guide

05.02.2019

Prominent Bankruptcy Attorney David L. Gay Joins Carlton Fields in Miami

03.26.2019

Carlton Fields’ Donald R. Kirk Appointed Chair of ABA Business Law Section Publications Committee

10.10.2018

Carlton Fields Selected As Finalist for The American Lawyer’s Litigation Department of the Year Award

07.09.2018

Super Lawyers Honors 81 Carlton Fields Attorneys on 2018 Florida “Super Lawyers” and “Rising Stars”

06.29.2018

Carlton Fields Ranked Top Firm and Attorneys Named Legal Leaders in Florida Trend Magazine's 2018 "Legal Elite"

05.04.2018

Carlton Fields Ranks Among Best in 2018 Chambers USA Guide

08.15.2017

78 Carlton Fields Attorneys Named "Best Lawyers in America"

07.31.2017

Fiduciary Duty Claims in Bankruptcy: Mitigating The Risks

06.23.2017

Florida Super Lawyers Ranks 92 Carlton Fields Attorneys as 2017 "Super Lawyers" and "Rising Stars"

06.21.2017

Carlton Fields Ranked Top Firm and Attorneys Named Legal Leaders in Florida Trend Magazine's 2017 "Legal Elite"

01.23.2017

Fla. Heart Doctor's FCA Settlement OK'd By Bankruptcy Judge

Recognition

- Board Certified in Business Bankruptcy by the American Board of Certification
- Business Law Section's Chair Award, American Bar Association (2022)
- *The Best Lawyers in America*, Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights/Insolvency and Reorganization Law, Commercial Litigation, Bankruptcy Litigation (2010–2025)
 - Tampa "Lawyer of the Year," Litigation – Bankruptcy (2021, 2025)
- *Chambers USA* (2010–2024)
- Top 50 Tampa Bay Super Lawyers, *Super Lawyers Magazine* (2013–2024)
- Top 100 Florida Super Lawyers, *Super Lawyers Magazine* (2011–2024)

- Florida Super Lawyers, *Super Lawyers Magazine* (2008–2024)
- Florida Legal Elite, *Florida Trend Magazine* (2009–2022)

Professional & Community Involvement

- American Bar Association
 - Council, Business Law Section (2022–present)
 - Chair, Business Law Section's Publications Board (2019–2022)
 - Chair, Use and Disposition of Property Subcommittee (2011–2013); Executory Contracts Subcommittee (2013–2014); Corporate Governance Committee (2017–present)
 - Chair, Bankruptcy Model Asset Purchase Agreement Task Force (2011–2016)
- American College of Bankruptcy
 - Fellow
- Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Tampa Bay
- The Florida Bar
 - Chair, Proceeding Supplementary Task Force (2013–2016)
- Leadership Tampa, Class of 2007
- Tampa Bay Bankruptcy Bar Association
 - President (2008–2009)
- U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Florida
 - Chair, Local Rules Committee (2014–2017)
- Children's Dream Fund
 - Past President

Speaking Engagements

- "Litigating D&O Claims in the Modern Age," American Bar Association, Atlanta, GA (2022)
- "Next Steps for Lenders as Deferred Payments Deadlines Approach," Carlton Fields (May 8, 2020)
- "Post-Shutdown: Economic Indicators & Outlook for Legal Departments and Law Firms," Latitude and AllianceBernstein (May 7, 2020)
- "COVID-19: What a Lender Can Do to Prepare for the Inevitable Defaults – Part Two," Carlton Fields (March 31, 2020)
- "[COVID-19: What a Lender Can Do to Prepare for the Inevitable Defaults](#)," Carlton Fields (March 19, 2020)

- "The Swamp Hasn't Been Cleaned Up: Recent Developments in Sales and Disposition of Estate Assets," National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges, San Antonio, TX (October 28–31, 2018)
- "Bankruptcy and Restructuring Hot Topics," 2014 Turnaround Management Association Annual Conference, Toronto, Canada (September 30, 2014)
- "Hot Topics Related to Use & Disposition of Property: Efficient Exits From Bankruptcy; Credit Bidding in Light of RadLAX; and ABA Model Bankruptcy APA," ABA 2012 Business Bankruptcy Committee Meeting, San Diego, CA (October 2012)
- "What Happens When a Bank Fails?," Washington, D.C. (October 2010)

Credentials

Education

- University of Florida College of Law (J.D., with high honors, 1996)
 - Order of the Coif
- University of Florida (B.A., 1993)

Court Admissions

- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit
- U.S. District Court, Middle District of Florida
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Florida
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida

Bar Admissions

- Florida

Industry Specialization

Certifications

- Business Bankruptcy